

**PROPOSAL OUTLINES IMPLEMENTATION OF MORE PROTECTIVE NATIONAL AIR
QUALITY STANDARDS FOR GROUND-LEVEL OZONE**

Contact: David Deegan, 202-564-7839

EPA is taking an important step in protecting the American public from ground-level ozone pollution by proposing a rule that outlines steps certain polluted areas would have to take to clean up their air. The proposed rule would establish guidelines for state and tribal authorities to implement the 8-hour national air quality standard for ozone, first enacted by EPA in 1997 and upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2001. The proposal seeks public comment on options for planning and control requirements for states and tribes, as well as on options for making the transition from the 1-hour ozone standard to the 8-hour standard. The new 8-hour standard is more protective of public health than the current 1-hour standard, because it more accurately reflects people's exposure to ground-level ozone. The proposed rule describes options for classifying nonattainment areas; however the proposal does not make any attainment designations. A nonattainment area violates the ozone standard or contributes to violations of the standard in a nearby area. Designations for nonattainment areas will occur by April 15, 2004 under a separate process. EPA will take comments on this proposed rule for 60 days following publication in the *Federal Register*. The Agency will also hold three public hearings across the country on the proposed rule (Dallas, Texas on June 17; San Francisco, Calif. on June 19; and Alexandria, Va. on June 27). More information is available at: <http://www.epa.gov/airlinks> .